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STATINTL

Disclose Aid from CIA to Church Unit

BY RICHARD PHILBRICK

The general secretary of the National Council of Churches said yesterday that in three instances council programs have received financial assistance from foundations allegedly linked to the central intelligence agency.

Dr. R. H. Edwin Espy, executive head of the council, told the council's general board, which is meeting in Chicago, that at most, the foundations gave only \$7,000 or \$8,000 to council activities.

The board also authorized a plan to testify in opposition to a prayer amendment to the Constitution proposed by Sen. Dirksen [R., Ill.].

Details Are Told

Detailing the aid from foundations said to have received funds from the CIA, Dr. Espy said that the Foundation for Youth and Student Affairs contributed between \$200 and \$300 in 1955 to pay expenses of a conference sponsored by the National Student Christian federation, a council affiliate.

In addition, he said, last year and this year the council has received approximately \$2,000 from the Kaplin Foundation to assist the council in its poverty rights program.

For several years before 1955, the David and Winfield Board Foundation contributed \$3,000 and \$4,000 annually to the national council for direct relief programs in the United States and overseas, Espy reported. The Baird Foundation went out of existence two years ago.

Pledges to Help Probe

Espy said that the council is "only too glad to cooperate to the fullest in any and all

federal efforts to investigate the foundation links" to the CIA.

"The council had no knowledge at any time that any of these gifts may have had any links with CIA involvement," he added.

The proposal to testify against the Dirksen amendment was adopted by the board's executive committee. The amendment states that nothing contained in this Constitution shall abridge the right of persons lawfully assembled in any public building which is supported in whole or in part thru the expenditure of public funds, to participate in non-denominational prayer."

The decision to testify against adoption of the amendment, a committee report said, was based on the conviction that the first amendment to the Constitution provides sufficient protection for the religious liberty.

Plan Is Told

If the board authorizes council representatives to testify before the Senate judiciary committee concerning the proposed amendment, stating that the amendment appears unnecessary and possibly frivolous.

The committee report said that the amendment gives no indication that the prayers to which it refers will be voluntary, and if they are voluntary, they are permissible now. To amend the Constitution to permit acts not forbidden is unnecessary and a frivolous use of a grave and rarely invoked expedient, the report states.

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